

1450 Onionville Road  
Sterling, New York 13156  
March 27, 2001

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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Re: Docket OON-1396 & Docket OOD-1598

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my opinion on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) proposed rules regarding genetically engineered (GE) products.

Your proposed new rules do not require pre-market safety testing. Considering there has been very little research done to assess whether ingesting GE agricultural products can cause allergic reactions and possible toxicity in humans, I can hardly believe that FDA's policy regarding genetically altered food products is to 'generally recognize them as safe.'

In making this determination, FDA is proposing only to require food producers to notify FDA by letter 120 days before putting a new biotech crop on the market! No safety testing is required! I am opposed to this policy and ask the FDA to require stringent, independent, mandatory pre-market long-term health testing of all genetically engineered products. In my opinion, allowing genetically altered foodstuffs onto our grocery shelves without prior safety testing is tantamount to health crises waiting to happen - mine in particular.

As a person who has been dealing with food allergies for years, perhaps even more onerous is FDA's present policy of not requiring food processors to label products with genetically altered ingredients. I strongly urge the FDA to rethink this position. I do not wish to be a guinea pig for America's food industry, Monsanto, et al. - to find out so many years down the road that my immune system and/or major organs have been damaged because I unknowingly ingested GE food products. I want to read full and accurate product labels to know which foodstuffs have been genetically modified. As matters now stand, the only way I can be certain the foods I buy have no genetically modified organisms (GMO's) is to buy products that specifically state no GMO's on the package or products that are certified organic.

I wish to state that I am not unequivocally opposed to genetic engineering; however, in this new science of biotechnology, humans are manipulating the basic fabric of life, tinkering with nature in ways that nature never intended. What scientists 'cook up' in tightly controlled laboratory environments is one thing, but regarding agriculture, allowing genetically altered life-forms into the wider environment with unknown, perhaps unknowable, effects is totally unconscionable. Therefore, I submit that the FDA must require pre-market environmental reviews of genetically engineered crops.

When the Government of the United States chooses not to evaluate the hazards of quite possibly the most powerful technology ever known, and instead is involved in promoting it, how can one help but ask just who is really benefiting from genetically engineered products? Certainly not U.S. farmers desiring to export their GE products to England or Europe, where consumers and retailers are hell-bent to remove products with genetically modified ingredients, or at the very least demanding they be labeled. Certainly not Third World countries that are fighting Monsanto and the U.S. government to draw up strong biosafety protocols. Certainly not the earth, herself.

Respectfully,

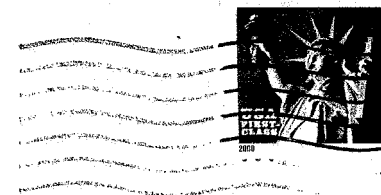
*Sandra M. Gorman*

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